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THE

MASONIC

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CHARACTER AND CORRESPONDENCE,

OF

GENERAL WASHINGTON.

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BY THE EDITOR OF THE MASONIC MIRROR.

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THE

MASONIC CHARACTER

OF

GEORGE WASHINGTON.

It has never been said that Washington was a superficial observer; that his deductions and conclusions were drawn from false premises; or that his opinions were given without regard to consequences. Even his enemies, (and, as good a man as he was, he had enemies,) have never been rash enough to urge such disreputable accusations against him. To a strong and vigorous mind, he united an accute discernment, a cool and deliberate method of action. By his great knowledge of human nature, of the human heart, of the principles which influence the actions of men, he was enabled to penetrate the secret recesses and to examine the secret springs of human action. It was the possession of this knowledge, a perfect understanding of his own powers, and a full control of his own passions, that carried him triumphantly and gloriously through an active and eventful life. It will not be said then that he was not competent to form a just opinion of the character, nature and tendency of the Masonic Institution. That he was qualified, by experience, to form such an opinion, appears from his letters; from the fact that he presided over the Grand Lodge of his native state; that he encouraged the organization of a Lodge in his own army, at the meetings of which he was often present, and in which he

often officiated ; and, though last, to the honor of Masonry, by no means *least, that he was presiding officer of Alexandria Lodge, at the time of his death.* He mingled much with his Masonic brethren : he loved their principles ; he studied their tendency, and he was enabled to say, they are "FOUNDED ON THE IMMUTABLE LAWS OF TRUTH AND JUSTICE."

These are the words of one, whose virtue, whose patriotism, whose talents, we all idolize ; whose character and whose fame, are the common property of his country :—*a sacred legacy !* The soul of WASHINGTON soared above duplicity of any kind, and he who never feared to face the cannon's mouth, or encounter any other dangers, when duty called, surely was possessed of sufficient courage, had he considered the Institution dangerous, to have raised his voice against it. It is a base libel to say that fear restrained him from exposing its iniquity ; and the hand that has the temerity to indite such a charge, can be dictated only by the most depraved and worthless of hearts. The English language would fail us, were we to attempt to sketch the characters of those men who daily charge him with having approbated and given his undivided support to an Institution, the principles of which are based on *murder, treason* and *infidelity* ; for in this light they represent the character of the Masonic Institution. What ! WASHINGTON a *murderer ! a traitor ! ! an infidel ! ! !* O, shame, shame, where is thy blush ! Is it possible that such a charge can be preferred by sane men ! Can Americans be in possession of their senses, and tolerate the scandal of such wretches ! It is impossible:—Delusion, infatuation, has taken possession of the seat of reason.

There is one class of individuals arrayed against the Masonic Institution, towards whom we ought perhaps,

to extend a greater degree of charity, than to believe that they would knowingly prefer accusations so ungrateful, so scandalous, against one whose memory they have been taught to revere, and whose virtues they have learned to love and admire. We refer to that class who cannot be said to possess the power of exercising their own faculties; who *think* and *act* by proxy! Anomalous as this may appear, it is nevertheless true that there is a class of such men—*automatons*—and a very large class too. They follow in the train of their leaders, and servilely "do the bidding of their masters;" who alonshould be held responsible for their acts. This class we would exhonerate from the charge of participating in the attempt to impeach the purity of the motives, and to blast the fair fame of our beloved *Washington*. To the seceding Mason, him who has been taught in his Lodge to revere the memory, to respect the name and to imitate the virtues, of our illustrious brother, we cannot better address ourselves, than in the words of the poet:

"Traitor to friendship's trust!
Who fawning smiled through fortune's sunny day,
But when thy friend was stricken to the dust,
Turned from his woes away--
Pass on dishonored one,
Thy deep'ning shame, thy baseness go with thee!"

While on this subject, we will briefly notice another of the many base and palpable libels that unprincipled wretches have attempted to cast upon the character of the great and good man of whom we have been speaking. We believe it was the notorious *Solomon Southwick*, who had the effrontery and baseness first to assert that Washington warns us in his "Farewell Address" to "*beware of Secret Associations, under whatever plausible character.*" It is unnecessary that we should inform our readers that this is a *base forgery*; that it is a *lie*, coined for

anti-masonic,or what is the same thing,political purposes; or that the word *secret* is not to be found in the whole address. It is one of the most ridiculous and contemptible forgeries and impositions ever attempted to be palmed upon the public. Every school-boy, who has learned his letters, is able to detect it; and will indignantly hurl it back into the face of him who conceived and uttered it. Washington speaks of the *danger* of *associations* and *combinations* formed for *political purposes*,* many of which did exist at that day, and for a long time previous. Witness the combinations against the war of Independence, against the Federal Constitution,and the societies formed in the time of citizen Genet, &c. We quote his words--"All obstructions to the execution of the laws, all *combinations* and *associations*, under whatever plausible character, *with the real design to direct, control, counteract, or awe* the regular deliberation and action of the constituted authorities, are destructive of this fundamental principle, and of fatal tendency." How far this language is applicable to the Masonic Institution, the reader may determine by reference to his letter to the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, under date of June 12, 5797; written about *nine months* subsequent, *after*, [let this be observed,] the above address was delivered, and about *two years before his decease;* wherein he declares, "*My attachment to the society of which we are members, will dispose me always to contribute my best endeavors to promote the honor and interest of the craft.*" If this fail to satisfy him, let him recall to mind that *Washington died while holding one of the most responsible offices in the gift of his brethren; and while a member of the Grand Lodge of his own state.* Surely further evidence of the fallacy of such a charge will not be required.

* *Like the Anti-Masonic Combination.*

The ancestors of Gen. Washington, came from England in 1657. He is the third descent after their emigration; was born on the 11th of February, old style, 1732, at the parish of Washington, Westmoreland county, Virginia. His father's family was numerous, and he was the first child of a second marriage. At the age of fifteen years, he was entered a midshipman on board a British vessel of war, stationed on the coast of Virginia; but, in compliance with the wishes of his very affectionate mother, did not prosecute this profession. When he was ten years old, death deprived him of his father, and the care of the family devolved on his elder brother, who had a command in the colonial troops employed against Carthagenia. On his return from this expedition, he named his patrimonial mansion, *Mount Vernon*, in honor of Admiral Vernon, from whom he had received many civilities. He was afterwards made Adjutant General of the militia of Virginia, but did not long serve in the appointment. After his decease, his brother *George* came into possession of the paternal seat, together with considerable landed property. After the revolutionary war, Gen. Washington was constantly a member of the Assembly, a Magistrate of the county, and a Judge of the Court; and was elected a Delegate to the first Congress in 1774, as also to that in the succeeding year. In short, *he achieved the Independence of his country, and died*, on the 14th December, 1799, aged 68 years. He was borne to the grave by military gentlemen, and *Brethren of the Lodge of which he had previously been Master.* The coffin bore his *Sword* and *Masonic Apron*, and the *Members of the Lodge walked as Mourners.* Funeral ceremonies were also performed by the Grand Lodge of this State; and by the fraternity in nearly every section of the country. His death was a matter of deep and sincere regret to the Masonic

brethren; and they publicly and spontaneously evinced the high respect they entertained for his worth and for his many eminent public and social virtues. They regarded him as the *Corinthian Pillar* of their Institution; and when he fell, they *mourned*,--a vacancy was made, which time can never fill. Thus much we have thought proper to say by way of biography, mainly for the purpose of shewing the respect paid to his memory by the members of the Fraternity, among whom he had long and perseveringly labored.

We have already observed that, at the time of his death, Gen. Washington was Master of Alexandria Lodge, located at Alexandria, in the District of Columbia. Can better evidence be required to disprove the slanderous assertion, which is often made by our enemies, that before his death, he withdrew from the Institution, and cautioned his countrymen against its dangerous tendency? Certainly not by rational men. Animated with a generous philanthropy, he early sought admission into our ancient and honorable fraternity, the better to enable him to cherish with advantage, this heavenly principle, and to enlarge the sphere of its operation. He cultivated our art with sedulous attention, and never lost an opportunity of advancing the interest or promoting the honor of the *Craft*. While Commander in Chief of the American revolutionary army, he countenanced the establishment and encouraged the labors of a travelling Lodge among the military. He wisely considered it as a school of urbanity, well calculated to disseminate those mild virtues of the heart, so ornamental to the human character, and so peculiarly useful to correct the ferocity of soldiers, and alleviate the miseries of war. The cares of his high office engrossed too much of his time to admit of his engaging in the duties of the chair; yet he found frequent opportuni-

ties to visit the Lodge, and thought it no derogation from his dignity, there to stand on a level with the brethren. True to our principles on all occasions, an incident once occurred which enabled him to display their influence to his foes. A body of American troops, in some successful rencounter with the enemy, possessed themselves, among other booty, of the jewels and furniture of a British travelling Lodge of Masons. The property was directed by the Commander in Chief to be returned, under a flag of truce, to its former proprietors, accompanied with a message purporting that the Americans did not make war upon institutions of benevolence." "Constant and punctual in his attendance, scrupulous in his observance of the regulations of the Lodge, and solicitous at all times to communicate light and instruction, he discharged the duties of the chair with uncommon dignity and intelligence in all the mysteries of our art. Nothing can more highly conduce to the prosperity and honor of masonry, than a successful imitation of this bright example.

His attachment to the Masonic Institution, and the estimation in which he held it, will appear from the subjoined correspondence, which breathes throughout, a spirit of brotherly love and kindness; and we earnestly recommend it to the careful aad serious consideration of the reader, whether Mason or anti-mason; we wish *friend* and *foe* to read the letters of Washington. To each they will afford satisfaction; they cannot fail to strengthen the opinions of the one, nor to allay the doubts and prejudices of the other; if any thing can accomplish an end so desirable. Among a certain class of men, they may have no weight; but to that class we do not address ourselves.

THE

MASONIC CORRESPONDENCE

OF

GEN. GEORGE WASHINGTON.

ADDRESS

Of the Master, Wardens, and Brethren of King David's Lodge, to GEORGE WASHINGTON, President of the United States of America.

SIR,—We, the Master, Wardens, and Brethren of King David's Lodge, in Newport, Rhode Island, joyfully embrace this opportunity, to greet you as a Brother, and to hail you welcome to Rhode Island.

We exult in the thought, that as Masonry has always been patronized by the wise, the good, and the great, so hath it stood, and ever will stand, as its fixtures are on the immutable pillars of faith, hope, and charity.

With unspeakable pleasure, we gratulate you as filling the Presidential Chair, with the applause of a numerous and enlightened people; whilst, at the same time, we felicitate ourselves in the honor done to the brotherhood, by your many exemplary virtues, and emanations of goodness proceeding from a heart worthy of possessing the ancient mysteries of our craft, being pursuaded that the wisdom and grace with which heaven has endowed you, will ever square all your thoughts, words, and actions, by the eternal laws of honor, equity, and truth; so as to promote the advancement of all good works, your own happiness, and that of mankind. Permit us then, illustrious brother, cordially to salute you with three times three, and to add our fervent supplications, that the Supreme Architect of the Universe may always encompass you with His holy protection.

MOSES SEIXAS, Master,
HENRY SHERBURNE, Warden, } *Committee.*
By order, WM. LITTLEFIELD, *Sec'y*

Newport, August 17, 1790.

THE ANSWER

To the Master, Wardens, and Brethren of King David's Lodge, in Newport, Rhode Island.

GENTLEMEN,—I receive the Welcome which you give me to Rhode Island, and, with pleasure; and I acknowledge my obligations for the flattering expressions of regard contained in your Address, with grateful sincerity. *Being pursuaded that a just application of the principles on which the masonic fraternity is founded, must be promotive of private virtue and public prosperity, I shall always be happy to advance the interest of the society, and to be considered by them as a deserving brother.* My best wishes, Gentlemen, are offered for your individual happiness.

G. WASHINGTON.

ADDRESS

Of the Grand Lodge of Ancient York Masons, of Charleston, S. C. to GEN. WASHINGTON, President of the United States.

SIR,—Induced by respect for your public and private character, as well as the relation in which you stand with the brethren of this society, we, the Grand Lodge of the state of South Carolina, Ancient York Masons, beg leave to offer our sincere congratulations, on your arrival in this State.

We felicitate you on the establishment and exercise of a permanent government, whose foundation was laid, under your auspices, by military achievements, upon which have been progressively reared the pillars of the free republic over which you preside, supported by wisdom, strength and beauty, unrivalled among the nations of the world.

The fabric thus raised and committed to your superintendance, we earnestly wish may continue to produce order and harmony, to succeeding ages, and be the assylum of virtue to the oppressed of all parts of the universe.

When we contemplate the distresses of war—the instances of humanity displayed by the Craft, afford some relief to the feeling mind; and it gives us the most pleasing sensation to recollect, that amidst the difficulties attendant on your late military stations, you still associated with and patronized the Ancient Fraternity.

Distinguished always by your virtues more than the exalted stations in which you have moved, we exult in the opportunity you now give us of hailing you brother of our Order, and trust from your knowledge of our institution, to merit your countenance and support.

With fervent zeal for your happiness, we pray that a life so dear to the bosom of this society, and to society in general, may be long, very long, preserved ; and, when you leave the temporal symbolic lodges of this world, may you be received into the celestial lodge of light and perfection, where the Grand Master Architect of the Universe presides.

Done in behalf of the Grand Lodge.

M. GIST, G. M.

Charleston, 2d May, 1791.

ANSWER

To the Grand Lodge of South Carolina, Ancient York Masons.

GENTLEMEN,—I am much obliged by the respect which you are so good as to declare for my public and private character. I recognize with pleasure, my relation to the brethren, of your society : and I accept, with gratitude, your congratulations on my arrival in South Carolina.

Your sentiments on the establishment and exercise of our equal government, are worthy of an association, WHOSE PRINCIPLES LEAD TO PURITY OF MORALS, AND ARE BENEFICIAL OF ACTION.

The fabric of our freedom is placed on the enduring basis of public virtue, and will I fondly hope, long continue to protect the prosperity of the architects who raised it.

I shall be happy on every occasion, to evince my regard for the fraternity. For your prosperity individually, I offer my best wishes.

G. WASHINGTON.

ADDRESS

Of the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons, for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, to the honored and illustrious Brother, George Washington.

SIR,—Whilst the historian is describing the career of your glory, and the inhabitants of an extensive empire are made happy in your unexampled exertions—whilst some celebrate the Hero, so distinguished in liberating United America, and others the Patriot who presides over her Councils,—a band of brothers, having always joined the acclamations of their countrymen, now testify their respect for those milder virtues, which have ever graced the Man.

Taught by the precepts of our society, that all its members stand upon a level, we venture to assume this station, and to approach you with that freedom, which diminishes our diffi-

dence, without lessening our respect. Desirous to enlarge the boundaries of social happiness, and to vindicate the ceremonies of their institution, the Grand Lodge have published "a Book of Constitutions," and a copy for your acceptance accompanies this, which, by discovering the principles that actuate, will speak the eulogy of the society; though they fervently wish the conduct of its members may prove its higher recommendation.

Convinced of his attachment to its cause, and readiness to encourage its benevolent designs, they have taken the liberty to dedicate this work to one, the qualities of whose heart, and the actions of whose life, have contributed to improve personal virtue, and extend throughout the world the most endearing cordialities; and they humbly hope he will pardon this freedom, and accept the tribute of their esteem and homage.

May the Supreme Architect of the universe protect and bless you, give length of days and increase of felicity in this world, and then receive you to the harmonious and exalted society in heaven.

JOHN CUTLER, Grand Master.
JOSHUA BARTLETT, } *Grand Wardens.*
MUNGO MACKAY, }

Boston, December 27, *A. L.* 5792.

THE ANSWER

To the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

GENTLEMEN,—Flattering as it may be to the human mind and truly honorable as it is, to receive from our fellow citizens testimonials of approbation for exertions to promote the public welfare, it is not less pleasing to know, *that the milder virtues of the heart are highly respected by a society, whose* LIBERAL PRINCIPLES ARE FOUNDED ON THE IMMUTABLE LAWS OF TRUTH AND JUSTICE.

To enlarge the sphere of social happiness is worthy the benevolent design of the masonic institution, and it is most fervently to be wished, that the conduct of every member of the fraternity, as well as those publications that discover the principles which actuate them, may tend to convince mankind that the grand object of masory is to promote the happiness of the human race.

While I beg your acceptance of my thanks for the "Book of Constitutions" which you have sent me, and for the honor you have done me in the dedication, permit me to assure you that I feel all those emotions of gratitude which your affection

ate address and cordial wishes, are calculated to inspire. And I sincerely pray, that the Great Architect of the Universe may bless you here, and receive you hereafter in his Immortal Temple. G. WASHINGTON.

FROM THE SAME.

"The *east*, the *west*, and the *south* of the *Grand Lodge* of Ancient, Free, and Accepted Masons, for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, to their most worthy Brother GEO. WASHINGTON.

"Wishing ever to be foremost in testimonials of respect and admiration of those virtues and services, with which you have so long adorned and benefited our common country; and not the last nor least to regret the cessation of them in the public councils of the Union; your brethren of this grand lodge embrace the earliest opportunity of greeting you in the calm retirement you have contemplated to yourself.

"Though as *Citizens*, they lose you in the active labors of political life, they hope as *Masons* to find you in the pleasing sphere of fraternal engagement. From the cares of state, and the fatigues of public business, our institution opens a recess, affording all the relief of tranquillity, the harmony of peace, and the refreshment of pleasure. Of these may you partake in all their purity and satisfaction.—And we will assure oruselves that your attachment to this social plan will increase; and that, under the auspices of your encouragement, assistance and patronage, the craft will attain its highest ornament, perfection and praise. And it is our earnest prayer, that when your light shall be no more visible in this earthly temple, you may be raised to the ALL PERFECT LODGE above, be seated on the right of the Supreme Architect of the universe, and receive the refreshment your labors have merited!

"In behalf of the grand lodge, we subscribe ourselves, with the highest esteem, your affectionate Brethren.

PAUL REVERE, Grand Master,
ISAIAH THOMAS, Senior Grand Warden,
JOSEPH LAUGHTON, Junior Grand Warden,
DANIEL OLIVER, Grand Secretary.

Boston, March 21, 5797."

THE ANSWER.

[*The following answer was received, and communicated to the Grand Lodge, June* 12, 5797.]

"To the grand lodge of Ancient, Free, and Accepted Masons in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

"BROTHERS,—It was not until within these few days that I have been favored by the receipt of your affectionate address, dated in Boston, the 21st of March.

"For the favorable sentiments you have been pleased to express on the occasion of my past services, and for the regrets with which they are accompanied for the cessation of my public functions, I pray you to accept my best acknowledgments and gratitude.

"No pleasure, except that which results from a consciousness of having, to the utmost of my abilities, discharged the trusts which have been reposed in me by my country, can equal the satisfaction I feel from the unequivocal proofs I continually receive of its approbation of my public conduct; and I beg you to be assured that the evidence thereof, which is exhibited by the grand lodge of Massachusetts, is not among the least pleasing or grateful to my feelings.

"In that retirement, which declining years induced me to seek; and which repose, to a mind long employed in public concerns, rendered necessary; my wishes, that bounteous Providence will continue to bless and preserve our country in peace, and in the prosperity it has enjoyed, will be warm and sincere; and *my attachment to the society, of which we are members, will dispose me always to contribute my best endeavors to promote the honor and interest of the craft.*

"For the prayer you offered in my behalf, I entreat you to accept the thanks of a grateful heart; with assurances of fraternal regard, and my best wishes for the honor, happiness, and prosperity of all the members of the grand lodge of Massachusetts. "G. WASHINGTON."

ADDRESS

Of the Grand Lodge of Ancient York Masons, in Pennsylvania, to George Washington, President of the United States of America.

SIR AND BROTHER,—The Ancient York Masons of the jurisdiction of Pennsylvania, for the first time assembled in general communication, to celebrate the feast of St. John the Evangelist, since your election to the Chair of government of the United States, beg leave to approach you with congratulations from the East, and in the pride of internal affection, to hail you as the great master-builder [under the Supreme Architect] by whose labors the Temple of Liberty hath been reared in the West; exhibiting to the nations of the earth, a model of beauty, order, and harmony, worthy of their imitation and praise.

Your knowledge of the origin and objects of our institution —its tendency to promote the social affections and harmonize the heart, give us a sure pledge that this tribute of our veneration, this effusion of love, will not be ungrateful to you ; nor will Heaven reject our prayer that you may be long continued to adorn the bright list of master workmen, which our fraternity produces in the terrestrial Lodge ; and that you may be late removed to that celestial Lodge, where love and harmony reign transcendant and divine ; where the Great Architect more immediately presides ; and where Cherubim and Seraphim, waiting our congratulations from earth to heaven, shall hail you Brother.

By order and in behalf of the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania, in general communication, assembled in ample form.

J. B. SMITH, G. M.

Attest, P. Le Barbier Du Plessis, G. S.

THE ANSWER

To the Ancient York Masons of the jurisdiction of Pennsylvania.

Gentlemen and Brethren,—I received your kind congratulations with the purest sensations of fraternal affection; and from a heart deeply impressed with your generous wishes for my present and future happiness, I beg you to accept my thanks.

At the same time I request you will be assured of my best wishes and earnest prayers for your happiness while you remain in this terrestrial mansion ; and that we may hereafter meet as brethren in the eternal temple of the Supreme Architect. G. WASHINGTON.

ADDRESS

From the Grand Lodge of Massachusettsts to Mrs. Washington, occasioned by the death of the General.

Boston, January 11, 1800.

Madam,—The Grand Lodge of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts have deeply participated in the general grief of their fellow-citizens, on the melancholy occasion of the death of their beloved *Washington.*

As Americans, they have lamented the loss of the Chief who had led their armies to victory, and their country to glory ; but as *Masons*, they have wept the dissolution of that endearing relation, by which they were enabled to call him their Friend and their Brother. They presume not to offer those consolations which might alleviate the weight of

common sorrows, for they are themselves inconsolable. The object of this address is, not to interrupt the sacred offices of grief like your's ; but, whilst they are mingling tears with each other on the common calamity, to condole with you on the irreparable misfortune which you have individually experienced.

To their expressions of sympathy on this solemn dispensation, the Grand Lodge have subjoined an order, that a *Golden Urn* be prepared as a deposit for a lock of hair, *an invaluable relinque* of the Hero and the Patriot whom their wishes would immortalize ; and that it be preserved with the jewels and regalia of the Society.

Should this favour be granted, Madam, it will be cherished as the most precious jewel in the cabinet of the Lodge, as the memory of his virtues will forever be in the hearts of its members. We have the honor to be, with the highest respect, your most obedient servants,

JOHN WARREN,
PAUL REVERE,
JOSIAH BARTLETT.

MRS. MARTHA WASHINGTON.

ANSWER.

Mrs. Washington's reply to the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts.

Mount-Vernon, January 27, 1800.

GENTLEMEN,—Mrs. Washington has received with sensibility, your letter of the 14th inst. enclosing a vote of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, requesting a *lock* of her deceased husband's *hair*, to be preserved in a *Golden Urn*, with the jewels and regalia of the Grand Lodge.*

In complying with this request, by sending the lock of hair, which you will find enclosed, *Mrs. Washington* begs me to assure you, that she views with gratitude the tribute of respect and affection paid to the memory of her dear deceased husband ; and receives with a feeling heart, the expressions of sympathy contained in your letter.

With great respect and esteem, I have the honor to be, Gentlemen, your most obedient servant.

TOBIAS LEAR.

JOHN WARREN,
PAUL REVERE,
JOSIAH BARTLETT, } *Past Grand Masters.*

*It gives us pleasure to state that the *Urn* and *lock of hair* are at this time in the possession of the Grand Lodge

CONCLUSION.

So long as the Masonic Institution shall continue to merit the approbation of such men as Washington; so long as such testimony as that we here present to the public, can be called up in her defence; so long shall the engines of persecution assail her in vain. The unhallowed object of her enemies shall never be attained:

> "Never till substantial night
> Has re-assum'd her ancient right;
> 'Till wrapp'd in flames, in ruin hurl'd
> Sinks the fabric of the world."